247.

The Love of GOD inſeparable from his people.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

INTERMENT

OF

Mr. WILLIAM WALLIS,

At *Kettering*, in *Northamptonſhire*.

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Who died OCTOBER the 12th, 1757,

In the FIFTY-FIFTH Year of his Age.

By JOHN BROWN.

LONDON:

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W. Hogarth!

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SERMON

Preached at the

INTERMENT

OF

Mr. WILLIAM WALLIS,

At Kensington, [illegible]

Who died October the 12th, 1757,

In the Forty-fourth Year of his Age.

By JOHN BROWN.

LONDON:

BRITISH MUSEUM

ROMANS, viii. 38, 39.

For I am perſuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come,
Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of GOD, *which is in* CHRIST JESUS *our* LORD.

THE enſuing Diſcourſe is occaſioned by the deceaſe and interment of our late beloved friend and brother in CHRIST, Mr. WILLIAM WALLIS, and by his deſire; and as he gave me a diſcretionary liberty in the choice of a *text*, I think none more agreeable than the above; as it was the laſt that dropped from his faultering

tongue, and quivering lips, as expreſſive of his living hopes, in dying moments.

The great apoſtle, in the preceding *chapters* of this *epiſtle*, largely inſiſts on the univerſal depravity and guilt of human nature; the impoſſibility of our juſtification before GOD, any other way than by the righteouſneſs of CHRIST; and the grievous complaints and war of GOD's children in this life, as attended with a law or *body of ſin and death.*

In this *eighth chapter* he ſets forth the glorious priviledges of believers in CHRIST, for their conſolation and triumph through him; as they are freed from all condemnations, have the ſpirit of adoption, are heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST. They have alſo their infirmities helped by the Spirit, eſpecially in prayer, and all things working together for their good; which the apoſtle evidences from the kind and gracious purpoſes and decrees of GOD concerning them; which ſufficiently proves, that he is for, and not againſt them. He further obſerves, that they may comfortably conclude, that God will freely give them all things, as he has not ſpared, but deliver-

ed

ed up his own Son for them: wherefore, well may it be ſaid, happy is the people that is in ſuch a caſe. Theſe weighty conſiderations raiſed the apoſtle's faith into a triumphant challenge [a], not only with reſpect to the ſecurity and happineſs of his own ſoul, but of all the children of GOD; wherein he ſufficiently anſwers all indictments that may be brought againſt them, as it is GOD that juſtifies them [b], CHRIST has died for them, is riſen again, &c. He then triumphs in the inſeparable love of CHRIST to his people [c]; and inſtances, that notwithſtanding their numerous and great diſtreſſes and enemies [d], they are carried through all, and made more than conquerors, through him that loved them. You may obſerve, that the words of my text are introduced as another ſolid foundation for triumph, from the firm perſuaſion he had alſo of the inſeparable love of GOD the Father to his People in CHRIST.

In attending to theſe words I ſhall conſider,

[a] Romans, viii. 33. [b] Verſe 34. [c] Verſe 35. [d] Verſes 36, 37.

I. The love of GOD in CHRIST to his people.

II. Its inſeparableneſs as exemplified in the text.

III. That a perſuaſion of it will ſupport a ſoul under the greateſt trials in life, and in death itſelf.

IV. And cloſe with ſome reflections ſuitable to the preſent occaſion and ſubject.

I. I am to conſider the love of GOD in CHRIST to his people.

The apoſtle tells us, that GOD *is love*[e]. Love is an eſſential perfection of his nature; all mankind, as the good works of his all-creating hand, were intereſted in his Love, and dignified as lords of this lower creation[f], and lived under his ſmiles and favour: but alas! how ſoon did man forfeit and loſe this ineſtimable jewel, by ſinning againſt GOD. He has brought himſelf, with all his poſterity, under the curſes of GOD's violated, but holy law[g]; and ſo are expoſed to the dreadful deluge of his vindictive diſpleaſure. 'Tis a certain truth no man is the object of the divine diſpleaſure, merely as

[e] 1 John iv. 8.
[f] Pſalm viii. 4, 5, 6.
[g] Gal. iii. 10.

as his creature; for infinite goodneſs would make nothing but what is good, and as ſuch all his works are approved of by him. But *man in honour* [h] abode not; he is become the miſerable object of the divine diſpleaſure by his own wilful apoſtacy from GOD, and *deſtroyed* himſelf by his rebellion againſt him [i]. That as a criminal in a moſt aggravated manner, he is condemned by the awful *judge of the whole earth*, who will *do right* [k].

It may be *objected*, GOD is ſaid to love *Jacob*, and hate *Eſau* [l], and that before either had done good or evil.

Anſwer, The hatred there ſpoken of, is not proper, or poſitive, as oppoſed to GOD's general love to mankind, as the work of his own hands; but a negative hatred, as oppoſed to GOD's ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing love in CHRIST to his people, of which *Jacob* was an happy object. But *Eſau* was by the ſovereign will of GOD refuſed or rejected, as an object of the ſame love, and on that account ſaid to be hated. Our Lord uſes the word *hate* [m] in a ſoft ſenſe; for poſitive hatred of our neareſt

[h] Pſal. xlix. 12. [i] Hoſea, xiii. 9.
[k] Gen. xviii. 25. [l] Rom. ix. 13. [m] Luke xiv. 26.

neareſt relatives, cannot be ſuppoſed to be enjoined by CHRIST.

It is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh betwixt GOD's general love to mankind, merely as his creatures, and his ſpecial love in CHRIST to his peculiar people. GOD's general love to us as his creatures we have all forfeited, as we have *ſinned*[n], and *come ſhort of the glory of* GOD; ſo that with apoſtate angels we deſerve to be *puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*[o]; neither can we ever reinſtate ourſelves in the divine favour; as none *can give to* GOD *a ranſom*[p]; and ſin has wretchedly *alienated* our minds from GOD[q]; that we all muſt inevitably have periſhed, had not GOD, in infinite wiſdom and condeſcenſion, fixed his ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing love on his people in CHRIST[r], in order to ſet forth the boundleſs riches of his grace in their ſalvation. This is the love of GOD in CHRIST, ſpoken of in the text, which is aſtoniſhing to angels, and the original

[n] Rom. iii. 23. [o] 2 Theſſ. i. 8, 9. [p] Pſal. xlix. 7.
[q] Coloſſ. i. 21. [r] Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

original ſource or ſpring [s] of all the bleſſings and happineſs that the ſaints enjoy in time, or will enjoy in eternity.

1. This love was from everlaſting; for the church in captivity owns the kind appearances of GOD in her behalf in old times [t]. The LORD to comfort her ſays, *Yea I have loved thee with an everlaſting love*, &c. as if he had ſaid, It is true I appeared to thee of old, but thoſe gracious appearances of mine were not the beginnings of my love to thee; it did not then commence; it is not of ſo late a date, but was from everlaſting; and as an effect of my everlaſting love, I in time *with loving kindneſs drew* thee. Thus were they choſen and bleſſed in CHRIST before the foundation of the world [u], and were the delight of CHRIST [x] from everlaſting.

2. 'Tis love that is ſovereign and free; its antientneſs manifeſtly proves it to be ſo, as it was fixed on the happy objects of it, before they were yet born, or *had done good or evil* [y], as GOD ſays to *Jacob*; ſo it is true of all the children of GOD,

[s] Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. [t] Jer. xxxi. 3.
[u] Eph. i. 4. [x] Prov. viii. 31. [y] Rom. ix. 11, 13.

GOD; the ſovereign will, and free good pleaſure of GOD, is the only riſe and ſpring of it. GOD loves his people becauſe he loves them [z]; no cauſe out of himſelf produces this ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing love to them [a]. Sovereign love might have fixed on ſome, or all of the angelic race, that kept not their *firſt eſtate*, and ſo made proviſion for their recovery and happineſs; but it hath fixed on the human race, not all, but ſome; and on them not becauſe they were better than others [b]; for they are ſome of the chiefeſt of ſinners [c] till drawn by the loving kindneſs of GOD [d].

3. 'Tis love that is inconceivably great, infinitely ſo, like its author. From this *great* love the *rich mercy* of GOD [e] flows that extends itſelf to the extream miſeries of his people. The great fruits and effects of it diſplay its greatneſs; the gift of GOD's *only begotten Son* [f], is the great gift of his love; a greater gift could not be given to the ſons of men. And with

[z] Deut. vii. 8. [a] Hoſea, xiv. 4. [b] Eph. ii. 3.
[c] 1 Tim. i. 15. [d] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [e] Eph. ii. 4.
[f] John iii. 16.

with him he *freely gives them all things* [a]. No greater affection can GOD have than what he has for them; for *as a father* he loves, *pities* [b], and is not aſhamed of them [c]; and his bowels of love will not ſuffer him to give them up to deſtruction [d], though they highly deſerve it. He eſteems them as his *jewels* [e]; and though he did *not ſpare his own Son*, but delivered him up for them, yet they ſhall be *ſpared* by him, and ſaved with an *everlaſting ſalvation* [f].

4. It is unchangeable love, that is invariably fixed on the objects of it. Thro' the intervention of the fall, they loſt the divine love and favour, as the GOD of Nature, and expoſed themſelves to his wrath and curſe; yet as a GOD of Grace in CHRIST, his love was not altered, or diminiſhed towards them; his covenant-engagements with CHRIST on their behalf [g], are a full proof of it; and how ſoon did he make known to our firſt parents the early proviſion that his love had made for them in the promiſe of the *ſeed of*

[a] Rom. viii. 32. [b] Pſal. ciii. 13. [c] Hebr. xi. 16.
[d] Hoſea xi. 8, 9. [e] Mal. iii. 17. [f] Iſ. xlv. 17.
[g] Pſal. lxxxix. 3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

the woman[a] breaking the ſerpent's head! And ever ſince he has invariably purſued the kind deſigns of his love[b], and grace in CHRIST, for the compleat and everlaſting ſalvation of all his choſen ones. Was his love changeable, they, according to their deſerts, would unavoidably be *conſumed*[c]. The apoſtle had this delightful view of it, which filled him with joy and triumph, as it is inſeparable from GOD's people. Which brings me to conſider,

II. Its inſeparableneſs, as exemplified in the text. In what ſtrong terms! and in what a copious manner! does the great apoſtle ſet forth this comfortable ſubject, as he was perſuaded,

1. That DEATH ſhould not ſeparate. Death is of a ſeparating nature; for that intimate union that ſubſiſts in life, betwixt our immortal ſouls and our frail bodies, is diſſolved, and broke in death: a ſeparation is then made; and theſe houſes of clay forſaken of their never-dying inhabitants, moulder to their original *duſt*[d]; and ſo continue till almighty pow-

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[a] Gen. iii. 15. [b] Zeph. iii. 17. [c] Mal. iii. 6.
[d] Gen. iii. 19. Eccleſ. xii. 7.

er raiſes them incorruptible [e], and makes them like unto the *glorious body* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in the joyful morning of the reſurrection [f]; when our glorified ſpirits will be reunited to them, never to be ſeparated again [g].

By death our neareſt and moſt endeared relatives and friends, ſuch as live in the greateſt harmony and love, whoſe ſouls are one, are ſeparated from each other, to the inexpreſſible grief of thoſe that ſurvive. And in death we bid an eternal adieu to all ſeen and temporal enjoyments; we leave all our earthly riches; have done with all our delightful abodes here; and all our fading honours die with us; for as we come *naked into the world* [h], ſo ſhall we *return*. How awful the exit of ſuch that have only a portion here [i], and have no intereſt in this love of GOD in CHRIST! But happy ſouls, infinitely ſo, who, notwithſtanding all the viciſſitudes of time, are ſtill the objects of this love; that death itſelf ſhall not ſeparate them from, but bring to an uninterrupted and full enjoyment

[e] 1 Cor. xv. 42. [f] Phil. iii. 21. [g] 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.
[h] Eccleſ. v. 15. [i] Pſal. xvii. 14.

of; for ſuch *ſleep in* JESUS [a], and whether *living or dying are the* LORD'S [b].

2. NOR LIFE. The apoſtle was perſuaded that life ſhould not ſeparate the children of GOD from his love. Tho' life is ſo deſirable, that all that a man has will he give for it; yet the pleaſing promiſe of life ſhall not ſeparate GOD and his people; for as they are *kept by the power of* GOD *through faith unto ſalvation* [c], rather than deny or forſake him, they have, and will part with life itſelf: *They loved not their lives unto the death* [d]. Though the men of the world live without GOD in it, and its deceitful riches, unſatisfying pleaſures, and fleeting honours, are their eager purſuit, and engroſs their hearts; yet theſe deluſive charms ſhall not ſeparate GOD and his people; it is true they ſoon would, was not GOD in love to their ſouls to ſhew them the vanity of theſe things, wean their hearts from them, and unite them to fear his name. Nay, though a *body* or *law* of *ſin and death* [e] attends them in life, and they are *bent to backſlide* [f] from GOD,

[a] 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. [b] Rom. xiv. 8. [c] 1 Pet. i. 5. [d] Rev. xii. 11. [e] Rom. vii. 24, 25. [f] Hoſea, xi. 7.

God, yet divine love reſts towards them[g]; and though God often ſeverely rebukes and chaſtens them[h], yet it is in love; and he reſtores their wandring ſouls[i], by ſhewing them the plague of their own hearts, the evil nature of ſin, and the freeneſs and conſtancy of his love unto them.

3. Nor Angels. The apoſtle was perſuaded that angels ſhould not. The ſtanding angels, thoſe pure and perfect intelligent beings, though happy ſharers of God's confirming love, yet they do not, nor would engroſs the divine love from his people. They are ſo far from attempting a ſeparation from it, that they admire and adore it; and are ſaid to *deſire to look into*[k] the myſterious depths of the love of God to his people; and therein is the *manifold wiſdom*[l] of God made known to them. They are willing to execute every kind office that belongs to them, *as miniſtring ſervants ſent forth to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation*[m]; and rejoice at the converſion of every

[g] Zeph. iii. 17. [h] Rev. iii. 19. [i] Pſal. xxiii. 3.
[k] 1 Pet. i. 12. [l] Eph. iii. 10. [m] Hebr. i. 14.

every ſinner to GOD [n]; and at death ſafely convey with angelic ſpeed the ſouls of GOD's favourites home to the heavenly manſions.

Fallen angels cannot ſeparate the love of GOD from his people, though they are deſirous of it, aſſiduous and unwearied in their attempts to do it. For the Devil is ſaid to *accuſe* them *before* their GOD *day and night* [o], and he finds many black indictments againſt them; but all in vain, as GOD juſtifies them [p]: he alſo as a *roaring lion* [q] often affrights the timorous and feeble ſheep of CHRIST; and by his fierce aſſaults would eaſily deſtroy them, if the lion of the tribe of *Judah* [r] did not defend and ſecure them. So that notwithſtanding all the attempts of infernal powers, they have a ſecure intereſt in the love of their GOD.

4. NOR PRINCIPALITIES, NOR POWERS. Princes and ſtates, and all antichriſtian powers have ſhewed their hatred againſt the people of GOD, and have exerted all their malice and rage in order to ruin and deſtroy them. By their fiery perſecutions

[n] Luk. xv. 10. [o] Rev. xii. 10. [p] Rom. viii. 33.
[q] Pet. v. 8. [r] Rev. v. 5.

ſecutions they have often ſeparated the ſaints one from another, and by imbruing their wicked hands in their innocent blood, have ſeparated their ſouls from their bodies; and no ſubtle art has been wanting, as they *lie in wait to deceive*[r], when they cannot deſtroy. Divine and human hiſtory furniſh us with innumerable inſtances of this kind; but bleſſed be GOD, it is not poſſible to *deceive* his *elect*[s]; nor can their utmoſt power, their moſt dreadful execrations, cruel and horrid perſecutions, even to death itſelf, ever ſeparate them from the love of GOD in CHRIST. They may *kill* their *bodies*[t]; but guardian angels ſafely convey their ſouls to GOD, and their duſt remains his care, till the morning of the reſurrection.

5. NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME. Preſent afflictions and diſtreſſes do often diſcourage the people of GOD, and the weight of them preſſeth them ſore, but ſhall not ſeparate them from the love of GOD; for they are fruits of his love, and what he does not willingly bring on them[u], and the deſign

[r] Eph. iv. 14. [s] Mat. xxiv. 24. [t] Mat. x. 28.
[u] Lam. iii. 33.

ſign and end of them is their good [x]; though they are ready to conclude God's thoughts are evil towards them [y], under their afflictions, yet he declares to the contrary. When God hides his face from his people [z], they are troubled; and too often it is the language of their unbelief, he will be *favourable no more* [a], and his *mercy is clean gone*: but God declares it is but *for a moment*, and *with everlaſting kindneſs* he will have mercy on them [b]. So that neither preſent afflictions, and diſtreſſes that are felt, nor future ones that are feared, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from his love.

Neither ſhall preſent, or future temptations, be they never ſo ſtrong and violent; for he will either ſuccour under them, or *make way for* their *eſcape* [c].

And although the ſins and iniquities of God's people cauſe a ſeparation [d] with reſpect to communion, and God hides his face from them, to ſhew his diſlike of their ſins; yet he abides in his love to their perſons. To manifeſt his abhorrence

[x] Pſalm cxix. 71. [y] Jer. xxix. 11. [z] Pſal. xxx. 7.
[a] Pſal. lxxvii. 7, 8. [b] Iſa. lvii. 7, 8. [c] 1 Cor. x. 13.
[d] Iſa. lix. 2.

rence of their ſins, he will *viſit* with his *rod* and *ſtripes* [a]; but his loving kindneſs ſhall not depart from them. In love he makes them deeply ſenſible of their ſins and follies; and ſo humbles and reclaims his backſliding children, and continues to *love* them *freely* [b].

6. NOR HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE. Expreſſions full and ſignificant, comprehending the whole univerſe, and every thing therein contained; all whether known, or unknown to us, in the height of heaven, in this lower world, or in the depth of hell, ſhall not be able to ſeparate. Neither the height of honours and preferments, nor the depth of reproach and diſgrace. Neither the height of proſperity and riches, nor the depth of adverſity and want. Neither the height of power, nor the depth of policy, in any of the creation of GOD, ſhall be ever able to bring about a ſeparation of the divine love from the ſaints. In what a ſtriking manner does the great apoſtle exemplify how inſeparable the love of GOD in CHRIST is to his people, and declares his

[a] Pſal. lxxxix. 32, 33. [b] Hoſea, xiv. 4.

perſuaſion of it! which brings me to conſider,

III. That a perſuaſion of it will ſupport a ſoul under the greateſt trials in life, and in death itſelf.

The word πέπεισμαι, ſignifies an aſſured confidence [a], or a full and ſtedfaſt perſuaſion [b]. The apoſtle had no doubt, but was certain of it, and of his own intereſt in the love of GOD in CHRIST. So he was enabled to ſay of CHRIST, who *loved me, and gave himſelf for me* [c]. And that a *crown of righteouſneſs* [d] was *laid up for* him, which the LORD the righteous judge would give him at that day. Thus was he ſatisfied that death would be his gain, and in a ſtrait was deſirous of quitting this earthly ſtage; being perſuaded it would be *far better* for him *to be with* CHRIST [e].

This aſſured and holy perſuaſion was no imaginary conceit, but the happy priviledge of many of the children of GOD, *Job* knew that his *Redeemer lived*, and that he would *ſtand at the latter day upon*

[a] Rom. xiv. 14. [b] 2 Tim. i. 12. [c] Gal. ii. 20.
[d] 2 Tim. iv. 8. [e] Phil. i. 21, 23.

upon the earth [f]. And though after his ſkin, worms would deſtroy his body, yet in his fleſh he ſhould ſee GOD. Whom he ſhould ſee for himſelf, and his eyes ſhould behold, and not another.

How frequently does the *Pſalmiſt* [g] with an aſſured perſuaſion and confidence appropriate the LORD as his own GOD, under a variety of agreeable and ſignificant characters.

With the ſame confidence the church in the *Canticles* [h] often claims CHRIST as her own, and acknowledges herſelf to be his.

It is a perſuaſion that cometh from him that calls the children of GOD out of darkneſs into his marvelous light. It ſprings not from moral ſuaſion, but from a living and divine faith. Though there may be true faith without it; as it is uſually from the ſealing operations of the Spirit of GOD [i], which are ſaid to be after we have believed; and ſo muſt be diſtinct from faith, as it follows it. This alſo ſhews that none but believers in CHRIST enjoy this valuable and ſoul-eſtabliſhing bleſſing.

[f] Job, xix. 25, 26, 27. [g] Pſal. xxiii. 1. xviii. 1, 2. xxvii. 1. [h] Song, ii. 3, 9, 10, 16. [i] Eph. i. 13.

This ſealing work of GOD's Holy Spirit, by a divine impreſs on the heart of a believer, certifies, aſſures and confirms him in the believing views of his intereſt, in the unchangeable love of GOD in CHRIST; and ſo of his right and title to all the promiſed bleſſings of the new covenant, which the LORD will beſtow on his people here, or in an eternal world. This divine impreſs is by a powerful application of a ſeaſonable promiſe; it may be when the ſoul is in the utmoſt diſtreſs, either from a view of the depravity and corruption of his nature; outward trials and afflictions; the violent temptations of Satan; the hiding of GOD's face; or an awful apprehenſion or fear of death. A word of comfort in ſuch gloomy ſeaſons, *how good is it*[k]? When thus found, the ſoul feeds on it, and it affords ſpiritual joy and rejoicing[l]. It is ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb[m].

There are but few believers, if any, but what meet with ſome ſuch ſeaſons in their experiences; wherein they are enabled to believe their intereſt in the LORD; though they are ſhort, they are ſweet ones.

[k] Prov. xv. 23. [l] Jer. xv. 16. [m] Pſal. xix. 10.

ones. Seaſons earneſtly deſired, by the children of GOD, who are often oppreſſed with unbelieving doubts and fears.

2. This aſſured and holy perſuaſion believers are favoured with from an experience of the fruits and effects of divine grace in their ſouls; hereby they know their intereſt in the love of GOD; when they are enabled to ſee that they are called by his grace, and have an affecting view of the glory of the Redeemer; ſo as to inflame their hearts in love to him, his ways, and his people[n]; to an hatred of ſin, and an abhorrence of themſelves, on the account of ſin: the faith, love, repentance and evangelical obedience of GOD's people, though they have no ſhare in recommending their perſons to the divine favour, and are no part of their juſtifying righteouſneſs before GOD; yet they are certain and comfortable evidences of their intereſt in the love of GOD, and of their juſtification before him; as they are the bleſſed fruits and effects of divine love and grace to their perſons; bleſſings, and not conditions of the covenant of grace: and ſuch that enjoy the bleſſings

[n] Prov. viii. 17.

bleſſings of the covenant, may be aſſuredly perſuaded of their intereſt in the covenant.

This holy perſuaſion every believer ſhould *give all diligence* [o] to enjoy; for the more we are living in an aſſured perſuaſion of the love of God to our ſouls, our hearts will be inflamed the more with love to him, with humility before him; joy will abound in our ſouls, and fruitfulneſs in our lives; we ſhall pour contempt on the world, be more conformed to CHRIST, and long to be with him where he is, to behold his glory. And nothing can be more ſupporting to ſouls under the greateſt trials in life, as they are thereby ſatisfied, that all is in love, and *in faithfulneſs* [p], and will *work together for* their *good* [q]. Nay death himſelf, that king of terrors, how dreadful ſoever he may be to others; thoſe that are perſuaded of their intereſt in the love of GOD in CHRIST, can welcome him, as a friend, for death is theirs [r]; and in executing his commiſſion, he brings their ſouls to their deſired haven of reſt; ſo as to

[o] 2 Pet. i. 10.
[p] Pſal. cxix. 75.
[q] Rom. viii. 28.
[r] 1 Cor. iii. 22.

to be for ever with their LORD, uninterruptedly enjoying the raviſhing diſplays of that divine love, their ſouls were living in the aſſurance of here. I ſhould now,

IV. Cloſe with ſome reflections ſuitable to the preſent occaſion and ſubject.

But it is generally expected on ſuch ſolemn occaſions as theſe, ſomething ſhould be ſaid of the deceaſed.

A ſervice I always ſparingly attend to; but as the memory of the juſt is bleſſed [a], and what is exemplary in our deceaſed friends ſhould be followed by us who ſurvive; with that view and deſign I ſhall take notice of ſuch things concerning our deceaſed brother, which I doubt not, all, who had the pleaſure of his acquaintance, will readily aſſent to the truth of.

In both his moral and religious character he ſhone in a moſt amiable light; and filled up every relation and ſtation, that providence had fixed him in, in life; ſo as to render him univerſally eſteemed by all that knew him, and as extenſively is he now lamented.

A huſband, none more tender and affectionate.

A father,

[a] Prov. x. 7.

A father, moſt compaſſionate and indulgent, full of natural affections, and as a father to all his relatives.

A maſter, honoured and loved by his numerous ſervants.

A neighbour, peaceable, kind and benevolent.

A friend, ſincere and conſtant.

A companion, moſt agreeably chearful, without the ſinful flights and exceſſes of the age.

And to the indigent always liberal.

As to his religious character, he was favoured with an early acquaintance with the LORD; was deeply led into the pure doctrines of divine grace; received the truths thereof in the love of them; and the ſavoury experience he had of their ſweetneſs and power on his heart, evidenced itſelf, not only in the ſtrictneſs of his morals, but more eſpecially in the ſacred duty of prayer, both ſocial and domeſtic.

His attachment to the Redeemer's intereſt was ſteady; nor was he aſhamed to profeſs himſelf one of the much deſpiſed denomination of Proteſtant Diſſenters called Baptiſts, by a very public ſubmiſ-

ſion

ſion to that ſolemn ordinance of CHRIST, according to the only primitive mode, immerſion.

His humility was ſingularly commendable in the whole of his life; eſpecially in his behaviour and deportment in the church of CHRIST, as he never aſſumed any more authority there than the pooreſt member. And he abounded in love and ſympathy to the children of GOD. And as the LORD bleſſed his induſtry with affluent circumſtances in life; he was always ready to communicate on all occaſions for the ſupport and encouragement of the intereſt of CHRIST, and for the relief of his poor and diſtreſſed people.

It was the pleaſure of the LORD to viſit him with a weakening diſorder for upwards of two years, which was ſanctified for his ſpiritual good; he frequently diſcovered his apprehenſions of a remove hence by it, and with patient ſubmiſſion viewed the hand of GOD in it.

And in his laſt ſickneſs, when all means failed, and all hopes of a recovery were gone, he chearfully reſigned to the divine will.

I aſked him if he was enabled to hold faſt his confidence; he immediately anſwered, that he truſted that the LORD loved him with an everlaſting love, and had many times given him manifeſt diſcoveries of his love; and that he knew that he was *faithful* [a] that had *promiſed*, and that he could not *deny himſelf*.

Another time taking notice of the great weight of his affliction, and that in a little time he would be free from all ſickneſs and pain; he ſaid, as expreſſive of his humble ſubmiſſion and patience, tho' in exquiſite pain, *He performeth the thing that is appointed for me* [b]. *The* LORD *is righteous in all his ways* [c]; and this is *the will of the* LORD concerning me.

Another time he ſaid with a pleaſing confidence, *The* LORD *is my portion, ſaith my ſoul, therefore will I hope in him* [d]; and that though his hand was heavy upon him, he could not murmur.

Throughout the whole of his illneſs he ſhewed admirable patience; and a few days before it pleaſed the LORD to take him to himſelf, he longed to depart to be with

[a] 2 Tim. ii. 13. [b] Job. xxiii. 14.
[c] Pſal. cxlv. 17. [d] Lam. iii. 24.

with CHRIST; in whoſe righteouſneſs alone he declared he expected acceptance with GOD; and that he ſhould be ſaved by him. Thus was death ſtripped of all his terror; as he was ſatisfied that the ſting was taken away, he did not diſcover the leaſt fear at the approach of the awful hour. And when expiring, though his ſpeech much failed him, yet he rehearſed the words of my text, as expreſſing the inward comfortable perſuaſion of his ſoul, as to his intereſt in the inſeparable love of GOD in CHRIST; and ſoon after fell aſleep in JESUS.

I would now addreſs myſelf to the near relatives of the deceaſed.

Shall I forbid mourning and ſorrow on the account of this trying ſtroke of the LORD's hand? I do not. It is not criminal, but lawful; ſince *Jeſus groaned* in the ſpirit, was *troubled*, and *wept* [a] for a departed *Lazarus*: Not to grieve would ſhew you to be without natural affection; and inſtead of ſhewing the Chriſtian temper, would diſcover a heart of ſtone, or ſtupidity, or the inſenſible brute. To

[a] Joh. xi. 33, 35.

lament on ſuch occaſions is neither acting below the man, nor the Chriſtian.

Can we part with a tender huſband, an indulgent father, one of the neareſt and moſt loving relatives, and not grieve? Surely not. But then conſider your ſorrow ſhould not exceed due bounds; as you have not the leaſt reaſon *to ſorrow*, as thoſe that are *without hope*[b]. You have moſt occaſion to weep for yourſelves; for truly your loſs is great, ſo is his gain; as he is now in the full and uninterrupted enjoyment of that love, which he was comfortably perſuaded of his intereſt in; as he was launching out of time into an eternal world.

A word to you his ſurviving and diſconſolate widow.

'Tis true you are deprived of *the deſire* of your *eyes*, of the neareſt and deareſt companion in life; but conſider, he is only gone home to his Father, and is gathered to his people[c]; and though he is gone to the place whence he ſhall not return[d], you will go to him. He that has taken him has the greateſt right to him;

[b] 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. [c] Gen. xxv. 8.
[d] 2 Sam. xii. 23.

him; and his remove is but from a land of ſin and ſorrow, to eternal joy and happineſs. Your beſt huſband ſtill lives[e], and death will never deprive you of him; agreeable to the divine exhortation, *Leave thy fatherleſs children* with GOD[f], he will take care of them; and truſt in him, who is a *Father to the fatherleſs, and judge of the widow*[g]. By affording his preſence he can ſupport you under the great loſs you have ſuſtained by this trying diſpenſation of his providence.

A word to you the fatherleſs and ſorrowful children. GOD has indeed ſtripped you of a moſt affectionate and indulgent father; one whoſe ſtudious concern was for your welfare. Happy will it be, if the loſs of an earthly parent is a means of engaging your choice of GOD as a father to you. And as you now have none to call father on earth, may the LORD be your father in heaven. The LORD has the bowels and compaſſion of a father; and he has promiſed to be a father unto his people[h], and that they ſhall be his ſons and daughters. It is his character, a helper

[e] Iſa. liv. 5. [f] Jer. xlix, 11. [g] Pſal. lxviii. 5.
[h] 2 Cor. vi. 18.

a helper of the fatherleſs [j]; nay he is called a father to ſuch [k], and in him the fatherleſs findeth mercy [l]. Let it therefore be your concern to love, honour and obey him; and rely on his fatherly protection and care.

Does GOD love his people in CHRIST, and is it inſeparable from them? Well may we admire and adore this love of GOD to ſuch ſinful worms as we; it paſſeth all knowledge [m]; 'tis an infinite ocean that we can never fathom.

See from hence the ſecurity and happineſs of GOD's people in all their ſeeming miſeries; no enemy, no temptation, no ſtorm whatſoever ſhall be able to deprive them of the love of GOD in CHRIST; notwithſtanding all their unbelieving doubts and fears, and all the dark diſpenſations of providence, they are ſafe in the heart and arms of their GOD.

May ſouls be perſuaded of their intereſt in the love of GOD in CHRIST. How deſirable ſhould this be to each of us! Let us give all diligence for it, earneſtly plead

[j] Pſal. x. 14. [k] Pſal. lxviii. 5. [l] Hoſ. xiv. 3.
[m] Eph. iii. 19.

plead at the throne of GOD for the ſealing operations of his Spirit, that he may *witneſs with* our *ſpirits* [n], that we are his. On this much of our comfort in this wilderneſs depends; and the more we are aſſured of the love of GOD, the more humble and cloſe ſhall we walk with GOD.

Again; we may from hence reflect on the inexpreſſible unhappineſs of ſuch as know not GOD, that live and die without an intereſt in this divine love. Wretched! and miſerable indeed! as deſtruction and miſery are in their ways; and everlaſting deſtruction [o], from the preſence of the LORD, and the glory of his power awaits them, as the juſt demerit of their ſin and rebellion againſt GOD.

Laſtly, this preſent providence may remind us all of our laſt and awful change; we have been attending funeral ſolemnities, and conveying the duſty remains of our deceaſed friend, *to the houſe appointed for all living* [p]. We know not how ſoon this laſt office of love our ſurviving friends may diſcharge for us: the time of our continuance

[n] Rom. viii. 16.
[o] 1 Theſſ. i. 8, 9.
[p] Job xxx. 23.

continuance here is ſhort, at the longeſt period, and nothing more uncertain; for though we may be in all the vigour and gaity of youth, we may ſoon be cut down; for *all fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field* [q]. Let us not therefore reſt ſatisfied without ſome aſſured perſuaſion of our intereſt in that divine love, which *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be ever able to ſeparate us from.*

[q] Iſa. xl. 6.

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